16 Dec 63

TO : Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Attention: [redacted]

FROM : Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT : [redacted] Commentson the Kennedy Assassination

1. Attached for your perusal are the written comments of a Soviet defector [redacted] on some aspects of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. As you know, [redacted] defected from [redacted] about ten years ago, and his personal knowledge is not up to date, but he has stayed in touch with Soviet intelligence developments to the best of his ability. His comments on how Lee OSWALD and his wife must have been handled by Soviet intelligence authorities while they were inside the Soviet Union are particularly interesting and his suggestions for the questioning of Mrs. Marina OSWALD are equally provocative.

2. We have decided to pass on his views without editing, and this Agency does not specifically endorse his conclusions or recommendations.

[redacted]

Enclosures: Per paragraph 1

[redacted]

12 December 1963

Distribution:
Orig. & 1 - Addressee
1 -
1 -
1 -
1 -
2 -
1 -
[redacted]

BASIC:
None

Document Number 413-76A
for FOIA Review on MAY 1976

16 DEC 63

[redacted]

SUBJECT : [redacted] Comments on President Kennedy's Assassination

1. We should understand that my comments which follow are not based solely on the thesis that OSWALD was specifically dispatched to murder our President. The very real possibility also exists that OSWALD was sent here on another mission by the KGB and subsequently accomplished the deed on his own initiative. However, such a possibility does not make the KGB less culpable as the seeds for OSWALD's act must have been planted while he was being trained in the USSR for his other mission. We might first examine the question uppermost in the minds of most Americans, "What did the USSR have to gain by killing their President?" I believe we can make a good case as to the precise gains accruing to the USSR and most specifically accruing to KHRUSHCHEV. The assassination of President Kennedy would accomplish the following for KHRUSHCHEV personally:

a. Western pressure behind the leadership of the USA would automatically ease up. Witness President Johnson's immediate conciliatory telegram to KHRUSHCHEV, after the murder. We might mention that the USA was the chief proponent for not extending long range credits to the USSR. Extension of long range credits is vital to the USSR at this juncture.

b. This leads us into the most pressing problem within the USSR. The West persistently underrates the extent of the Soviet internal situation. It was my prediction that as a result of the mismanagement of the 1963 harvest and the CHICOM arguments that KHRUSHCHEV would resign during the upcoming December plenum of the Communist Party of the USSR. Our President's death thus effectively diverts the Soviets' attention from their internal problems. It directly affects KHRUSHCHEV's longevity.

c. In the Cuban situation any USA or Cuban expatriate actions against Cuba will not be tainted by the fact that these are vengeful acts against Cuba because of OSWALD's "Fair Play for Cuba" associations. Obviously the Soviets properly interpret our situation in that President JOHNSON will restrain any planned interventions in Cuba for a long time.

d. A more amenable America will strengthen KHRUSHCHEV's hand in his running battle with the CHICOMS. He will thus have another reason to say his form of peaceful coexistence is superior to that of the CHICOMS'.

[redacted]

e. Conceivably any of President KENNEDY's planned actions to get even more firm with the Soviets during the pre-election year are thus sabotaged by the President's murder.

f. The Soviets obviously understood that the death of President KENNEDY would result in the emergence of DeGAULLE as a strong Western leader. DeGAULLE of course says "what is good for France is not necessarily bad for the USSR."

g. The death of President KENNEDY removes a popular rallying point for our allies. Furthermore, and more pertinent, his death removes a symbol for Soviet intellectuals who have inevitably made invidious comparisons between their own intellectual freeze and the flowering of the arts under the KENNEDYs. The problem of the intellectuals in the USSR should not be interpreted as the least of KHRUSHCHEV's internal problems. We must recall that beginning with Lenin, intellectuals have provided the impetus for revolution in the USSR and they comprise one of the three balls KHRUSHCHEV must constantly juggle—the intellectuals, the Party and the military.

h. If the USSR has any ambitious aims in manipulating U.S. public opinion their murder of President KENNEDY would serve to exacerbate the present differences between the radical left and right in America. In fact the USSR propaganda machine began to say the murder was committed by the radical right as soon as the deed was done and before OSWALD was captured.

i. Finally, the death of President KENNEDY, whether a planned operation or not, will serve the most obvious purpose of providing proof of the power and omniscience of the KGB. This application of sheer terror could be interpreted as a warning to Russia's own citizens, as the Soviet intelligence services have suffered some very real reverses recently with PENKOVSKIY, NOSENKO's defection, their ignominious expulsion from the Congo, etc. I have long predicted that the USSR would take some drastic action to halt the rapid erosion of their security.

2. Can we briefly view the OSWALD operation as a mounted KGB operation to kill the President? What are the essential ingredients?

a. The KGB had some three years to assess OSWALD in the USSR. Laymen will denigrate the value that the KGB attaches to such on the spot assessment. They may also say that OSWALD was a nut and properly would not be entrusted with such an operation by the KGB. However, the KGB properly knows that historically most assassins have been unbalanced, maladjusted types.

b. In such an operation the KGB would not use a Soviet citizen though the very real possibility exists that OSWALD was assisted by a Soviet illegal of the KGB 13th Department. Sticking to essentials—It was a good plan that did succeed.

c. OSWALD did escape from the book building.

d. He did get to a theater which could have been his point of contact with his illegal case officer. Certainly we know the KGB's penchant for using theaters for meeting places.

e. After his arrest, which was only due to his unfortunate encounter with Policeman TIPPIT, OSWALD did remain silent. How like the behavior of Col. ABEL was his behavior in this regard.

3. Also the very real possibility exists that the KGB intended to liquidate OSWALD after he did the job. His meeting in the theater was probably for just such a liquidation or removal from the scene. In RUBY's part in the operation we must recognize the possibility that RUBY was also a KGB hatchet man. Looking at the bare essentials of his part in the operation we see the following:

a. RUBY had access to the police station. Reports say he personally knew most policemen.

b. He successfully silenced OSWALD.

c. RUBY remains silent and his cover is holding up.

d. He has a good legend of temporary insanity.

e. He has a reasonable chance to escape the death sentence.

4. The undersigned might be better qualified to comment on the OSWALD aspects of this case if he knew the following about his activities prior to his departure to the USSR: (a., b., and c. below offer three possible answers to the question, "Why did he go to Moscow?"

a. First, OSWALD was a self-made Marxist or Communist who decided to go on his own; that is, he made this decision by himself and prompted by no one. He possibly was looking for a better life without knowing what the Soviet Union really is.

b. Second, after OSWALD's discharge as an "undesirable" from the Marines, he found himself in a difficult and unpleasant situation. Is it possible that in this situation he was noticed by a spotter or recruiter for the Illegals or some other department and was considered as a possible candidate for use or recruitment? The full information about OSWALD was sent to Moscow, and on Moscow's order an investigation of OSWALD was made and there followed a decision to "invite" him to Moscow. Using the word "invite", the undersigned has in mind that some agents or recruiters through conversations with OSWALD, but without actually suggesting the trip itself, inspired OSWALD to travel to the USSR. And, in this case, it is possible that someone gave him some financial assistance and some advice on how to do this.

c. Third, OSWALD went to Moscow, or was sent to Moscow, by some pro-Soviet, pro-Communist, pro-Cuban organization(s), having in mind that he would stay in the Soviet Union for a few years, learning more about the Soviet Union and receiving instructions for future operations, activities, etc.

5. Knowing for sure that the Soviets never give a visa without making an investigation of the person making the application, we have to make our own investigation of the following questions:

a. When did OSWALD first begin to express his wish to go to the Soviet Union?

b. To whom did he talk, whom did he contact at this early time, and how much time elapsed between these talks and contacts and his application?

c. How, when and through whom did OSWALD get his Soviet visa?

d. How long did it take for him to get the visa?

e. Who personally gave the visa to OSWALD? We must know if the person at the Embassy who talked to OSWALD was a KGB employee.

f. When and how did OSWALD travel to the USSR (air, sea; through which countries; in which countries, if any, did he make stops; how long were such stops)?

6. Together with the above, it is very important to know of OSWALD's circumstances before his trip to the USSR. Who knew in advance that he was going and who knew that he had gone: mother, brother, relatives, friends, neighbors, girl friends, boy friends, old buddies, etc. To whom did OSWALD say goodbye before he left for the USSR: personally or by telephone, by mail? Did he ever ask anyone any questions on traveling to the USSR? When?

7. OSWALD in Moscow. When OSWALD arrived in Moscow, he was under observation, investigation and complete control by the KGB. In this particular case, under the Second Chief Directorate (CI). Being under the control of the KGB, at the same time he was under heavy investigation directed at answering the question of why this stupid American had come to the USSR (it doesn't make any difference whether they knew in advance about OSWALD or not; anyway, they would conduct such an investigation). Every possible bit of information was taken from OSWALD about the USA, especially about his service in the Marine Corps, etc. At the same time, OSWALD was under constant observation and study for possible future use by the Soviet Intelligence and CI services.

8. It should be noted here that any foreigner, especially an American, who arrives in the USSR for permanent or prolonged stay always is examined by the Soviet State Security as a possible candidate for future use (special training and recruitment) within the USA or other countries (but against the USA). After a good study and investigation which continues about six months in Moscow, under normal financial support and minimum comfort from the KGB, the KGB makes its conclusions: that OSWALD is clear and is who he claims to be and that he might possibly be used or useful for Soviet Intelligence or CI Service. NOTE: the undersigned believes that during his (OSWALD's) first few months in Moscow, additional inquiry and investigation of OSWALD was going on through the Soviet Embassy in Washington and through Soviet agents networks in the USA and possibly through pro-Soviet and pro-Communist organizations within the USA.

9. After being a few weeks or months in Moscow, OSWALD expressed a wish to stay forever in the Soviet Union and to be a Soviet citizen. Then the KGB said to him: "If you really want to be a Soviet citizen and serve the Communist cause, you must denounce American Imperialism and American citizenship. Therefore, somewhere in this period, OSWALD went to the U. S. Embassy and renounced his U. S. citizenship. After this act State Security decided to give OSWALD some kind of job in accordance with his knowledge and capabilities, at the same time continuing to study him as a potential agent.

10. Because to make a good agent takes a long time and because OSWALD was impatient—and because he had not yet been given Soviet citizenship—the KGB decided not to make of him a good agent, but did not break relations with him and decided to use him in a more or less open way.

11. When OSWALD showed some dissatisfaction about the Soviet way of life (it is usual for Americans)—and by this time OSWALD had already met his girl friend (the KGB probably helped

him to find her—to make him happy and to make sure that he would not leave the Soviet Union)—the KGB at the same time continued to train him, probably in the way of an old-fashioned Marxist, telling him that he would be a good fighter against imperialists and against American millionaires, such as ROCKEFELLER, KENNEDY and others. And somewhere here, while in this kind of training, a low level case officer of State Security told him that to have a better life in the U.S. you have to fight very hard to bury capitalism, as our Nikita Sergeyevich says; together with capitalism, you have to bury all the millionaires, including your first beast and blood-sucker, KENNEDY (NOTE: this is not a tall story; it is the way in which State Security operates with the stupid Marxists and with naive followers of the Communist movement). If on a high level within the KGB it was decided that there is nothing good in OSWALD and that he is just a naive American and that he could not be relied upon fully, but that nonetheless he could be used because he is for our cause and is against capitalism in general, then the following would have been suggested—after OSWALD already had asked permission to return to the USA: OSWALD was told to be a good fighter against capitalism and to secure your Soviet citizenship, you must show yourself as a good fighter for the Communist cause inside the USA; then, we give you permission because we believe you are a strong Marxist to return to the USA and to do something for our common cause, such as to help any American pro-Soviet organizations or, for instance, become a member of a Free Cuba Committee or in case of crisis to do something outstanding—that will be noticeable everywhere—that will prove that you are a real Communist. Then, somewhere here, if he was already a Soviet agent or not, the girl showed up, or she was there before, but by this time she was pregnant and OSWALD decided to go to the USA. Then he was told After this talk, OSWALD shouted—where is your freedom? She is my wife, we have a child, and I would like to go. If he did make a big noise, they decided to let him and her go; or if he already was a trained agent, then without any kind of noise on his part, but with some difficulties, permission was granted for her to go with him.

12. Looking at the wife of OSWALD, we should have in mind that she was and still is an agent or at least a low-level informant of the KGB. If she was not before she met OSWALD, she became one after the second day she met him. This is the regulation in State Security on how to handle foreigners—it makes no difference whether they are Communists or not.

13. Investigation of OSWALD's wife should be undertaken as soon as possible, with special attention being paid the questions to follow:

a. First, who is she? Her education, profession, age, family background, Party affiliation (Komsomol membership). If she was a member of the Komsomol, then the Komsomol organization will take any steps possible against her traveling to the U. S. Also, she must be expelled from the Komsomol, and then she automatically would be considered a member of the Imperialist Camp. Then, if she was a member of the Komsomol and this action did not take place, it was because of KGB interference against such action. The same action would relate to any of her relatives—father, mother, brothers....if they were members of the CPSU or Komsomol.

b. To which offices was she invited before and after their marriage? If she was invited to some official Soviet offices, and if these offices asked her not to marry a foreigner and not to go with him, then probably she was not a member of the Komsomol and she did it on her own will; but if she answers that no one invited her to such offices, then the whole job was done by the KGB—smoothly and quietly, with no talk going around about it.

c. Who helped her and how many times to write papers for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to say that she had married an American citizen and would like to go with him to the USA? If it was done a few times and with great difficulties, then probably it was done only with a little help from the KGB. If, however, the papers were prepared only once and permission was granted after only a few months' wait, then everything was done by the KGB. (According to the American newspapers, her application for permission to come to the U. S. was processed very easily and quickly.)

d. When and where did they register their marriage? Who were the witnesses to that marriage? How many relatives and friends (of wife) were present at the wedding and celebration. What kind of gifts did they receive at the time of marriage and from whom? Where did they take up residence after marriage? Were they given an apartment, or a room? And in what neighborhood?

e. Where did her husband, OSWALD, work? In what factory? What were his hours of work? How long did he spend in Moscow before he went to Minsk? Who chose Minsk—did he or did someone else?

f. Who were her husband's friends? From what circles? Workers? Intellectuals?

g. How many times were she and her husband—while they lived together—invited to the police stations or any other Soviet government offices, together or separately? (NOTE: There is no other office than the KGB which would make such an invitation. It makes no difference if they were agents or not.)

h. How smart (intelligent) is she? Does she really speak no English? Is her English better than she shows or better than it should be after being here only two years? Or worse?

i. What does she say about life in the Soviet Union?

j. Did her husband have a gun while he was in the Soviet Union? If so, how does she know about it? When did he get it? Did he have special permission to carry a gun? Did he bring this gun with him across the border? For your information, nobody carries a gun in the USSR without the KGB eventually learning of it. Least of all an American.

k. Who gave financial help to them before they left the Soviet Union? (NOTE: For a regular worker in the Soviet Union, it is impossible to save enough money to buy a ticket and make any kind of preparations to go abroad.)

l. Who gave instructions to OSWALD to ask for financial assistance at the American Embassy upon his return to the USA?

m. Was their first child born in Russia—baptized in the USSR? If so, in what church? Whose idea was it? Did they baptize their second child, born in the U. S.?

n. If OSWALD never had a permanent job here in the USA, then who was going to finance his next trip to the USSR? How much did his wife know about his plan to return to the USSR via Cuba?

14. The investigation of the wife should be made step by step, keeping in mind and never forgetting that OSWALD as well as she herself were under constant observation and with constant contacts with organs of the KGB. Without such observation and contacts with organs of the KGB, no foreigners can live within the Soviet Union.

15. In any investigation of this case we should not lose the initiative. In view of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding this case, the FBI, through the Department of State, could logically enough request that the USSR provide all available info on OSWALD's story in the USSR and the purpose of his visit to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City. A friendly nation can be expected to honor such a request. We might learn a great deal from the Soviet reply.